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EXCISE E.O. 12356

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INFO IO 21, GPM 03, SC 01, RSC 01, USIA 12, H 02, NSC 10, L 03, INR 07, P 04
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9286

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 9174

FOL TEL RECD THIS STA FROM DANANG DATED OCT. 20, DANANG 253.
RPT YOUR STATIONS:

QUOTE

DANANG 253

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SUBJECT: CATHOLICS AND LOWER HOUSE CANDIDATES

1. CONOFF DISCUSSED CATHOLIC POSTION IN LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS IN DANANG DIOCESE (DANANG, QUANG NAM, AND QUANG TIN) AND CATHOLIC POSTURE NATIONALLY WITH [redacted] OCTOBER 19, 1967.

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2. [redacted] SAID THAT AFTER MUCH DISCUSSION HE AND PRIESTS HAVE DECIDED TO SUPPORT CATHOLIC NGUYEN BUOI AND NON-CATHOLIC CAPT DANG UAN TIEP FOR THE TWO DANANG SEATS. BUOI, "THOUGH NOT A GOOD CATHOLIC", HAS CHANCE OF GETTING SUBSTANTIAL LABOR SUPPORT AS CVT CANDATE. TIEP, ALTHOUGH NOT FROM DANANG, IS "VIRTUOUS AND

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IS GENERAL KY'S CANDIDATE". [redacted] INDICATED HE BELIEVES BOTH HAVE SOME CHANCE OF WINNING FOR IN LARGE FIELD OF CANDIDATES 30,000 TO 35,000 VOTES WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO MAKE A WINNER. ACCORDING TO [redacted] TIEP BELIEVES THAT WITH 10,000 OF POSSIBLE 15,000 TO 16,000 CATHOLIC VOTE PLUS HIS MILITARY AND "BUDDHIST" SUPPORT HE CAN WIN. LATER, HOWEVER, [redacted] GRANTED THAT BUDDHISTS WILL PROBABLY SWEEP DANANG AND COULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN QUANG NAM.

3. [redacted] SAID THAT CATHOLICS WOULD SUPPORT TRAN CONG HOI IN QUANG TIN BUT THAT THEY HAD NOT MADE DECISION IN QUANG NAM. HE AND PRIESTS DO NOT LIKE PHAN HUY ANH, CHAIRMAN OF CATHOLIC CITIZENS BLOC IN QUANG NAM AND SELF STYLED LEADING CATHOLIC CANDIDATE.

4. ON NATIONAL SCENE [redacted] SAID CATHOLICS GOING ACTIVELY AHEAD WITH PLANS TO FORM "POLITICAL PARTY" AROUND NGUYEN GIA HIEN'S

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GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCE. ALLIANCE OF HIEN AND CAO SLATES "SOON TO BE JOINED BY THAT OF NGUYEN UAN HUYEN" IS FIRST MANIFESTATION. HOWEVER, OUTSIDE FORMATION OF THIS "MAJORITY BLOC" IN SENATE, CATHOLICS PLAN TO "WAIT UNTIL THINGS BECOME CLEARER" BEFORE FLESHING OUT NATIONAL POLICAL PARTY.

5. [redacted] SAYS CATHOLIC "VISITORS" FROM SAIGON BELIEVE CATHOLICS WILL CAPTURE ABOUT ONE-THIRD AND POSSIBLY UP TO FIFTY SEATS IN THE LOWER HOUSE.

6. AS AFTER SEPT 3 ELECTION [redacted] WILL LEAVE FOR SAIGON MONDAY MORNING, PROBABLY TO PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS TO DETERMINE CATHOLIC STRATEGY IN LIGHT OF RESULT OF LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS.

7. ELECTION SHOULD BE GOOD TEST OF [redacted] AND PRIESTS CONTROL OVER ELECTORATE, PARTICULARLY IN DANANG WHERE BOTH CATHOLIC" CANDIDATES" ARE NOT FROM DANANG AND IN TIEP'S CASE NOT EVEN A CATHOLIC. CATHOLIC VOTE AND BUDDHIST VOTE WILL PROBABLY GREATLY DIVIDED IN MARKED CONTRAST TO PRESIDENTIAL AND UPPER HOUSE SHOWING.

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8. COMMENT: [redacted] AS NOT YET AWARE THAT MILITANT BUDDHISTS IN DANANG HAVE NOW APPARENTLY DECIDED TO SUPPORT VUONG DUY QUYNH AND PHAN XUAN HUY.
WE BELIEVE THAT ALTHOUGH LOCAL NATURE OF ELECTION WILL PREVENT MILITANT BUDDHISTS FROM DELIVERING AS LARGE A VOTE AS IN SEPT 3 ELECTION QUYNH AND HUY ARE AMONG TOP 3 OR 4 CANDIDATES IN DANANG. LOCAL CVT IS APPARENTLY NOT PUSHING HARD FOR SAIGON CHOSEN BUOI AND IN ANY CASE UNLIKELY TO CONTROL VOTE OF PREDOMINATELY NON-CATHOLIC MEMBERSHIP IN FACE OF TINH HOI POGODA SUPPORTED BUDDHISTS. SIMILARLY IN FACE OF TINH HOI CANDIDATES LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY TIEP RUMORED TO BE SPENDING UNLIKELY TO OUTWEIGH DISADVANTAGES OF NOT BEING FROM DANANG AND BEING WIDELY CONSIDERED AS "KY'S CANDIDATE".

9. IN QUANG TIN HOI IS ONLY NON VNQDD CANDIDATE. GIVEN SPLINTERED NATURE OF PARTY HOI WITH MORE OR LESS GUARANTEED VOTE HAS GOOD CHANCE. IN QUANG NAM [redacted] AND PRIESTS PROBABLY PARTICULARLY DISTURBED AT ANH'S PARTICIPATION IN RECENT MEETINGS OF MILITANT BUDDHISTS. DENOUNCING NEW CHARTER IN NEW CHARTER IN APPARENT EFFORT AT COURTING BUDDHIST VOTE.
KOREN UNQUOTE BUNKER

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